

A
SERMON

PREACHED

Upon the 29th of *MAY*,

In the Parish-Church of

St. MARGARET.

I N

Lyn-Regis,

I N

NORFOLK.

In a Great Presence.

By *THO. FISH, A.M.*

L O N D O N,

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To the most High, Puissant, and Noble Prince,
*Henry Duke of Norfolk; Earl Marshal of Eng-
land; Earl of Arundel, Surrey, Norfolk and Nor-
wich; Baron Howard, Mowbray, Segrave, Brews
of Gower, Fitz-Alan, Warren, Clun, Oswaldestre,
Matravers, Scales, Graystock, Furneival of Shef-
field, and Howard of Castle-Rising; Constable
and Governor of His Majesty's Royal Castle
and Honour of Windsor; Lord Warden of the
Forest of Windsor; Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk,
Surrey and Berks, and of the City, and County
of the City, of Norwich, &c. High Steward of
Lyn-Regis in Norfolk.*

May it please Your Grace,

T*His Discourse was design'd to attend and che-
rish the Publick Devotions of a very Loyal and
Worthy Corporation; to which Your Grace has
lately vouchsafed to own a Relation, and whose In-
terests You are pleased to Espouse: But it had the
Fortune to wait upon Your Grace, likewise, in the
same Solemnity, at the Head of an Illustrious Assem-
bly of Persons of Great Honour and Quality; All full
of most Dutiful Affections to His Majesty, and Ho-
nourable Thoughts and Veneration of Your Grace.*

A 2

Coming

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Coming into the World under such kindly Aspects, and honestly (however weakly) endeavouring to speak out upon an agreeable Argument; it met with a Favour from Your Grace, bigger than it did aspire to, or could deserve: Which was, to have Your Repeated Commands for its Publication. After this, Duty was to govern and control my Inclination; and it became me, on the first fitting Occasion, to lay It and my Self at Your Grace's Feet. This I now do in all Humility: Beseeching Your Pardon of my Presumption Herein; Which I am the more encouraged to hope for, when I reflect upon that Great Goodness, and Sweetness of Temper, which in Your Grace is as Eminent, as Your High Authority and most Noble Descent. I am,

My LORD,

Your GRACE'S

Most Obedient Servant,

THO. FISH.

[1]

Zechariah, 12. 8.

In that day the Lord shall defend the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the House of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them.

THIS day was this Scripture fulfilled to these Nations; and he that comes prepared, as he ought, to celebrate this Solemnity, will presently discern, what an easie Accommodation thereof may be made to the state of our own Affairs; and that the words afford a seasonable Theme for an holy Panegyrick, and are fit to remind us of those Mercies we here are met to commemorate and acknowledge. Your selves, I know, can well transfer them, and make the Application: But if I may contribute any help to this, be pleased that we reflect a while on their Ground and Occasion; which having done with any tolerable Attention, we shall grow doubtful (perhaps) whether in *Palestine*

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or

or *Britain*, the Scene might be more fitly laid.

God had now brought again the Captivity of *Sion*, and redeemed his chosen Nation from Vassallage under haughty Tyrants: and the Mercy was so great, and the Joy so transporting, that it almost astonished and overwhelmed their Sense. They were tempted to disbelieve their Eyes, and to suspect it was a Dream of the Night, and not a Vision of the Day, that entertained them. For the Revolution and Turn of Affairs was so wonderfully surprising and great, so unexpected a Face of things did appear, and yet so calmly accomplished, and smoothly brought to

Act. 12.9. pass, that (like *St. Peter*, when his Chains dropt off at the Angel's Voyce) at first they thought their Deliverance but an imaginary thing, fine wrought in the Shop of Fancy, and that (surely) it could not be a real Event of things, or a solid and substantial Change.

But when they found that it was a publick and palpable Blessing that had befallen them; a Blessing, the happy influence whereof every awakned Eye might see, and every well affected Heart might feel; what Gladforn
 Passions

Passions then throng'd in their enlarged
 Breasts, and warm'd and actuated every Part?
 How was their Mind ravish'd with the Joy,
 and how was their Countenance adorned
 with a pleasing Grace? How did the wasted
 Kingdom erect its drooping Head, and the
 Church new string her Harp, which had so
 long hung upon the Willows in the times of
 her Desolations? How did their Mouths sing
 out the Praises of Him who rules in all the
 Kingdoms of the Earth, and how did their
 Hearts glow with Love and Loyal Venera-
 tion to *Zerubbabel*, and other Princes of an-
 cient Race? How did all the Sorrows of their
 past Captivity disband and vanish, till scarce
 any other Remembrance was left of former
 Miseries, than what might heighten the Re-
 lish of present Enjoyments? Nay further,
 How did the Fame of this spread into distant
 Countries, and Foreign Lands: And whe-
 ther they did envy or congratulate *Judah's*
 Happiness, yet still how were they obliged
 to say, *The Lord had done great things for*
them?

And what happy Consequents did attend
 and wait upon this Revolution, cannot be
 better described, than in our Prophet's Lan-

- Ch. 6. 13. guage ; The Temple was rebuilt, and the solemn Worship restored ; Sanctuaries rescued from shameful Prophanation, and the places of God's Feet made glorious : The Hierarchy was restored, and the Mitre placed upon the High Priest's Head, and Plenty was poured down from the Stores of Heaven :
 Ch. 3. 5.
 Ch. 8. 12. The Vine gave her Fruit, and the Ground her Increase, and the Heavens their Dew ;
 Ch. 8. 19. and instead of Monthly Fasts, God was to the House of *Judah*, Joy and Gladness, and chearful Feasts.

And now nothing could be added to the greatness of their Happiness, but Continuance and Perpetuity, and a wise Provision for its lasting and uninterrupted Enjoyment. For Religion would soon be lost, without an established *Defender of the Faith* (successively) to maintain, protect and support it. Peace would be dishonourable, or short-liv'd, without an Head of Counsel, a Scepter of Justice, and a Sword of War to secure and guard it. Plenty would expose a Nation to be the fatter Prey for Rapine or Ambition from abroad, or incline them to be wanton, or desirous of Change at home ; without the Force of Government to repel the one, and the

the Wisdom and Authority of it, to check and to curb the other.

And therefore, that Religion, and Peace, and Plenty might be continued to them and their Posterity, and that God might crown all his other Favours in their Restoration, and that no Oppressor might go through them any more; God resolved to settle the Government in the hands of a meek and righteous Prince, and to entail the Succession upon his House; and so to secure them in the Enjoyment of all the Interests that could be dear unto them; and by that means, as formerly by the Ministry of Angels, to dispence and convey to them the various Issues and Fruits of his Providence and Care. And thus *Zerubbabel* and his House are brought in (as *Adam* was) to govern a World, from which *Chaos* and Confusion were but lately fled; and to cultivate that Garden of God, whose Fences and Walls were now rebuilt and repaired. And this gives us a View of the main Intendment of the words, and also of the Interest and Share our selves may challenge in them. *In that day the Lord shall defend, &c.*

In

In my prosecuting of which, and the business of the day, I crave leave to insist upon these four following Observables.

First, *That it was a Special Act of Providence that brought about this Change in the Jewish, and our Affairs : In that day the Lord shall defend the Inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

Secondly, *That thereby the State of a Kingdom, and of a Prince, from feeble and weak, became as David.*

Thirdly, *That hereby the Government was established, not only in a single Prince, but in his Lineage and House : The House of David shall be as God.*

Fourthly, *The happy Influences this Government should have upon the Subjects of it ; and this illustrated by the gracious Conduct of the Angel (of old) that went before the Camp of Israel.*

First, *That it was a Special Act of Providence, &c. Ut supra.*

Providence chiefly exercises it self about Humane Affairs in three ways.

1. Permissively.
2. Directively.
3. By way of Energy, and Efficacy.

1. In

1. In the way of Sufferance and bare Permission. This I the rather remark, because we have been sadly sensible, how perversly and impiously some have alledged the Argument of Providence : when God was said to vouch the things which he abhorred, and Heaven was forced to father the wicked and the monstrous Brats of Earth : when Proceedings were justified, as the Great Turk does his, purely by the Success. As if Crimes ceased to be such, when they once grew great, prosperous and incorrigible ; As if Good and Ill, Right and Wrong, Just and Unjust, were to be measured by the length of the Sword, or the strength of a Party ; not by the eternal and unchangeable Standards of Equity and Reason, and the Obligation of Divine and Humane Laws ; As if God's secret Inspirations could whisper Contradictions to his revealed Will ; and the same pure, heavenly Source and Fountain could send forth sweet Waters and Bitter ; As if God approved every thing, which he does not forthwith punish ; and to suspend his Thunderbolts, were a full Evidence of his Love.

No doubt can be made, but that whatever Evil or Calamity there is in a City, 'tis permitted

permitted by the wise Ruler of the World, in order to reform the Guilts, or improve the Graces of those 'tis inflicted on, or to revenge God's just Quarrel on an ungrateful Nation. But then it would be considered, that an Executioner is oft-times not the least of Criminals, and that the very Office is so vile and ignoble, that generous and good Natures disdain and abhor it. Thence it was, that God suffered the Venemous Tail of a Nation to lash and scourge the Head, and the more noble parts of it, and did not forcibly interpose, to stop that Malice and Treachery, which he grievously hates, and has severely forbidden: for thus Man, in his lower Dominion over the Works of God's Hands, admits of the Savage Cruelty, or Brutal Rage of one Creature, to tame, or to subdue another. Nor can this in any wise be colourably proved, to stamp the Divine Allowance on unrighteous practices, though it do demonstrate the Divine Wisdom, in making the worst things (some way or other) subservient to its own holy Purposes, and great Designs.

2. Again; The Providence of God, with a watchful Care, directs and superintends all
Events

Events below ; and (especially) with a concerned and jealous Eye, applies it self to the Rise and Fall of Kingdoms and Empires, the Advancement or Decay of States or Commonwealths : Infomuch, that they who have been let into the Secrets of God's Counsels (as *Daniel*, and the Prophets of old) have there seen the exact and fatal Schemes of their flourishing or declining Estate, and the most considerable Periods of their Fortune in following Ages and Generations.

And this is of mighty Use to the great Purposes of Religion ; for it impresses upon Men awful Apprehensions concerning God ; it engages them to look up beyond the Sphere and Activity of second Causes (which ever moving in a lower and circumscribed Orb, must follow the Sway and Revolution of the great first Mover,) it assures them that they are not abandoned to the Casualties of blind Fortune, or the Violences of unreasonable Men ; but are still (in their greatest Extremities) under the wise Disposals of a gracious God. This, finally, in the Success even of lawful Enterprizes, calls upon Men, to give unto God the Honour due to his Name ; not to sacrifice to their Net, or burn Incense to
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their Dragg, or ascribe happy Events wholly to the reach of their Counsels, or the puissance of their Arms.

3. But then, above and beyond both these, there is in some Revolutions, a signal and efficacious Interposal of Providence, bringing about things in so surprising ways, as that they are not only above the visible Power, but against the Tendency of lower and second Causes.

Upon which Score we may warrantably affirm, that they bear the Marks and Signatures of a Contrivance and Production Divine; and as a Child sometimes challenges the Father by uncommon Features and Resemblances, so these speak themselves the Offspring and Issue of Heavenly Power and Love. For thus the Beauty, or wonderful Greatness of a Work, and the strange way of effecting it; the disproportion of it to second Causes, or its Contrariety to the Springs and Principles of their accustomed Motions; The universal Good it sheds around, beyond all humane Hopes and Expectations: These, and such as these, I take to be Characters of Divine Interposals in Energetical Ways, or else it seems hard to me to prove that God
does

does specially interest himself in the Management of Humane Affairs, since Miracles ceased, and Immediate Revelations were of no longer use and necessity.

Now thus it happened to *Judah*, and to us, in our happy Restoration; and we (as they) must own that God himself was on our side, and has done great things for us, whereof we rejoyce.

In their Case, 'tis well known, that *Cyrus* issued out an unaccountable Proclamation for the *Jews* to return to their own Land, and to rebuild their Temple, and to fortifie their City, and bestowed on them Wealth, and enabled them with Commissions to carry on the Work.

What now would his States-men say? What strange Counsel (shall we call it,) or rather, What Frenzy is this that now governs the King? thus against all Rules of Interest and Honour, to dismiss a People inured to his Service, by seventy years Captivity: A People too, of Religion and Rites different from, and reproachful to, the *Persian* Worship; while many conquered Nations of our own Religion are yet detained in hard Subjection. But if the Slaves must go, let them

them first be squeezed of their Wealth, and deprived of Opportunities to revolt : Let their City remain Dismantled, and their Walls in Ruins ; and then, if they prove slippery, they may easily be reduced. But shall they who ought to be Slaves for ever, or to purchase their Freedom at vast Rates, be cheaply dismissed, and sent home laden with *Persian* Wealth, and so be put into a Capacity to fight us with our own Weapons ? Thou great *Cyrus* ! Surely thy wonted Conduct has forsaken thee, and a long Course of prosperous Success has rendred thee forgetful of the common Rules of Policy.

No, no ! God had the Heart of this mighty Prince in his Hand, and inspired him with kind Thoughts to a Captive People : He who dissolves the Snowy Mountains into kindly Rivers (from the South) to enrich the barren Land, brooded upon the Spirit of this *Persian* Monarch, and melted down his Rigours into warm Affections to his ancient People ; And thence our Prophet says, that *They returned not by Might, nor by Power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Ch. 4. 6.

As we have heard, so have we seen, in the City of our God, in the *Jerusalem* of our *Israel*,
rael,

rael, God upholdeth the same for ever. He calmed the Rage of a Mutinous and Fanatick Army, and sent a Spirit of Division among the Leaders and Chiefs of prosperous Usurpation, as of old he did between *Abimelech* and the Men of *Sichem*; and at that Breach, made way for his Anointed to enter. He made a little Cloud from the North (of despised and neglected Beginnings) grow and increase to vast and formidable Dimensions, and, after it had hover'd a while over a doubtful Nation, made it to disclose from its darksome Womb, a happy Shower that blest and enriched all the Land. He confounded the Subtilty of the Crafty, and broke the Forces of the Strong, and dissolved the Combinations and Confederacies of those, whom Interest, and Ambition, and common Guilts, and Fears had long cemented together. He charmed the Passions of an Head-strong and Tumultuous People, till those very daring Factions, which, with Armed Legions, had broke into the Quarters of well-intrenched Monarchy, were all subdued under the Feet of an Unarmed, and a Peaceful King. He gave him a Triumph, without a Fight; and a compleat Victory, without Resistance or Engage-

Engagement : And thus (as anciently) the Mountains before *Zerubbabel* were made plain, and no Road but was passable, when God and Angels led the way.

Thus were *Judah*, and We, led out of sad Bondage, to Freedom and to Peace, to Laws and Religion in our Native Land : And by the greatness of the Work, and the littleness of the Humane Helps instrumental in it, we safely may conclude, it was God's Doing, and that God in that day did defend the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*.

Secondly, *That thereby the State of a Kingdom, and the Condition of a Prince, from feeble, became as David.*

1. As to the state of the Kingdom. And here (without any Figures or Aggravations) it may be justly affirmed, that the *Lamentations*, *Jeremy* made to condole the *Jewish* Captivity, suted us in almost every part ; and where we fell short in the exactness of the Paralell, we out-vyed them in the bitterness of our Misery.

They were carried Captives into a strange Land, but it was by the Chance of an Open and Generous War ; and however, they
were

were in Servitude under a mighty Monarch, who was the Terror of the whole World : But we, by unnatural Discord and seditious Insurrection, became Slaves to our Servants and Mercenaries, as the *Egyptians* were once enslaved by their own *Mamalukes*. We had the Vexation to see that loathsome Plague renewed, Frogs croaking in our King's Palaces, and Creatures of a low and degenerate Race infesting the Seats of Majesty and Honour.

That hateful and unseemly thing was our sad Portion, *which, Solomon says, disquiets the whole Earth, and which it cannot bear, A Servant when he reigns, and a Fool when he is filled with Meat* : And our Kingdom underwent St. Peter's way of Crucifixion, with its Head downwards, and the Heels aloft. Mechanics set up for Rulers and Chiefs, and Mush-romes grew up to Majestick Pride, as if we were to be, not only the Mark of Fortune's Malice, but the Matter of her Merriment and Scorn. We needed not then a Foreign Country to be Captives in, our own was worse than *Babylon*, a Stage of greater Misery and Confusion : and wherever then you cast your Eyes, they were met with a sad and a dismal Prospect.

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The Beauty of Holiness was all fullied and besmeared, and the more rash and neglectful Addresses to God were, by so much more religious was the Worship esteemed. Cruelty was taken to be Zeal, and Sacrilege and Villany were listed under the Colours of Reformation. The Remnant of the Royal Party that was left, (at length) began to envy those that fell in the High Places of the Field, rather than thus survive, to see Faction rampant, and Rebellion prosperous; God's Prophets persecuted, and his Service abolished, and his Temples prophaned, and his Sacred Vicegerent, by Impious Hands, barbarously slain. Had *Babylon* any Miseries comparable to the Arbitrary Tyrannies of *Select Committees*, and *High Courts of Justice*, and Pretence of *Martial Law*? What a hard Bondage was this, when but to question the Justice of their Proceedings was turned into a Plot against the State; and to debate the Legality of a Tax, did merit a Decimation? Whatever Treasures, or precious Vessels were carried away from *Jerusalem*, as the Spoils of War, fell far short, in value, of the prodigious Fruits of the long Rapine, Plundering and Sacrilege, which were exercised Here: For,
upon

upon fair Calculation, it was computed that, before ever the Usurper came to sway, in eight Years time, forty Millions had been raised by the Grandees of Parliament ; which was judged more Money than had been levied on the Subject, in all the Monarchs Reigns, since the *Norman* Conquest, till that time. Were the Jews compelled to speak a strange Language ? So were we. Miscreants of the blackest Hew, we were taught to call Saints and Precious Ones ; a Cabal of Arbitrary Grandees, were now stiled Keepers of our Liberties ; Juncto's of Bloody and Cruel Men, a Committee of Safety ; the common Boutefeuau's and Incendiaries of State, Assertors of our Laws, and Patriots of our Country ; Demure Cant, and Hypocritical Jargon, went by the name of powerful and awakening Gospelling. Were Attempts made to enslave them in their Consciences, as well as Bodies ? So it was here, and severe things threatned and inflicted on all that would not fall down and worship the Idol of Liberty and Reformation which they had set up ; and which were as much what they pretended to be, as *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image was a true God. However, to establish their Ini-

quity and Usurpation as sure as they could, they imposed Impious Engagements, and Oaths of Abjuration of the Royal Line, as if they were resolved to push fair for Men's Eternal Ruin, as well as Temporal.

And now the Affairs and Interests of the Royal Party were at a very low Ebb, and no Glimpse of Hope appeared from any Quarter or Region round about. Even those that were most Loyally inclined, found that, by struggling in the Toyls, they were more fatally entangled ; and while they played on the Game with an Unfortunate Hand, instead of retrieving what was lost, they only made new Additions to the Power and Courage of the Adversary. All therefore they could do, was, to sit down and weep by the Waters of their Captivity, when they remembered *Sion*, and to joyn with the Guardian-Angel of the Land, who doubtless (as it is in the 1st Chapter of this Prophecy at the 12th Verse) sympathized with the piteous Calamities of its Charge, and would sollicite Heaven in some such Pious Expostulation as this.

How long, O Lord of Hosts ! How long wilt thou not have Mercy on Jerusalem, and on the Cities

Cities of Judah, against which thou hast had Indignation this twenty Years? Look down from Heaven, and behold thy Church in Ruins, and thy Vicegerent hunted as a Partridge on the Mountains, and thy Gospel prostituted to the Lusts of Wretched Hypocrites, or Ambitious Men; and the whole Land oversown with Guilt, or Fears, or Blood. How long wilt thou be wroth with thy People that prays, and hide thy Face in an angry Cloud from Judah thy Sanctuary, and Israel thy Possession? Thou, indeed, hast been justly displeased at us; But what are these U-surpers that are at Ease, that they thus help forward, and aggravate our Affliction? Up then, Lord, and let not Man have the Upper Hand; Let not the Sword devour for ever, nor Violence and Confusion be entailed on us and our Heirs for evermore. Remember, that the Wrongs done to thy Anointed below, take Heaven at their Re-bound; and that he cannot be innocent to his God, who is an Offender against his King. Pity a Nation that has no Pity upon it self, and scatter the People that delight in War; and do Thou, Lord, help in Trouble, for Vain is the Help of Man. 'Tis a Cause now fit for thee to appear in; and since all other Medicines fail, dispense to us out of the Treasures of Thy

own Goodness and Benignity. None now can Rival Thee in any Part of the Glory of the Work; and Thou wilt thereby signalize thy Power, no less than thy Pity and Compassion. Let thy Hand be upon the Man of thy Right Hand, and on that Royal Person, whom thou so miraculously preservedst for thy own Self. Make good the Happy Omens and Glorious Presages at his Birth, and convince the World, that the Heavens did not then smile on him in vain; Settle us again upon the old Foundations, and let not a Nation, whom thou hast formerly signalized by a Train of Illustrious Mercies and Protections, become the Scorn and Derision of our Enemies round about us.

Such were the sorrowful Accents, and pious Breathings of God's Angels, and Godly Men; and at length, to shew the prevalence of those Christian Weapons, Prayers and Tears, kind Heaven graciously was pleased to hearken; and on the sudden, removed all our Misery, and took away our Reproach; and, as *David*, by an unexpected Unction, was taken from following the Ewes great with Young, to feed *Jacob* God's People, and *Israel* his Inheritance; so here, a new, and
far

far more glorious Scene did presently open and disclose ; and the Royal Interest, *from feeble*, and almost forlorn, *became as David* ; and God, by a mighty, but gentle Spirit, turned our Captivity as the Rivers in the South : And (as in the World's first Creation) out of a Mass of Matter, dark and disorderly, blended and confused, of jarring and disagreeing Natures, he produced a comely and well compacted Fabrick of Government, in Church and State, which should move orderly, and minister to the Good of each particular Being.

2. As to the Condition of our Prince : None ever so like *David* as He, in Dangers, and Deliverances, and unexpected Advancement. What though he was destined to a Crown, by Divine Appointment and Decree ; who would not yet have preferred any private Station, with Security, before it ? rather than for ever (on the Account of that Eminence) be persecuted by the jealous Rage of *Saul*, and the virulent Calumnies of *Doeg*, and the fierce Insurrections of *Sheba*, and the unnatural Rebellion of *Absalom*. Unravel the History of both those Royal Persons, and tell me if any two Characters do so justly agree :

How

How were Both couped up one while in such a Cave, another in such a Wood ; forced hastily to flee to *Moab*, and to *Gath*, and (thanks to that Providence that takes care of Kings) found more Kindness and Shelter among uncircumcised *Philistines*, than their own Subjects, in their Rightful Dominions ? How did both receive in themselves, each Moment, the Sentence of Death, by new Dangers, and frightful Alarms ? And how were both sometimes in the greatest Perplexity and Doubt, which they ought most to be jealous of, the Violence of implacable Enemies, or the Treachery of pretended Friends.

But why do I thus lay open the Distresses of Sacred Majesty, to our own great Dishonour ? Let dark Shades for ever be drawn over the Visage of those Times ; let them never see the Light : Let us no longer see such Misfortunes display'd, as upbraid our Guilts no less than move our Pity ; but let us turn our Eyes on *David*, Crowned in *Hebron*, from his Exile in *Gath*. He asked Life of God, and He, with Life, bestowed the Possession of a Crown in Peace : He subdued the People under him, and the Nations under his Feet, and there remained no Strife at all,

all, but a Dutiful and Loyal Emulation, who should be the First in bringing back the King. And now the Daughter of *Sion* might well rejoyce greatly, when her King came in such a meek and peaceful way; not in confused Noises of War, not in Garments rolled in Blood: He came as the Rain into a Fleece of Wool, and the Gentleness of his Entrance was, at once, an Earnest, and a Shadow of the future Grace and Goodness of his Government. And thus it appears, that the State of our Kingdom, and the Condition of our Prince, *From feeble, became as David*. Which was the second Thing.

Thirdly, The next is, *That hereby the Government was established, not only in a Single Person, but in his Lineage and House*; The House of *David* shall be as God.

What Aspect this may have upon the Spiritual Kingdom of the *Messiah*, and what the Mytical Intendment and Sense in that regard may be, I will not now enquire; but with an Eye to the Temporal Government of the House of *David*, I must consider wherein they so resemble God, as that it may be accommodated to Sovereign and Hereditary Princes at large.

Now

Now here I must first premise, that Scriptures themselves do ascribe to them some Shadows of Divine Excellencies and Perfections, and so also do the Sages of our Municipal Laws ; lest any should pertly here object, that this Divinity is broached only by Court-Chaplains, or Pensioners to Prerogative.

The Inspired Writings say, that it is God whom Sovereign Powers do represent, that it is by the Beams of his Majesty they shine, that He has said They are Gods , that he puts the Sword of Justice in their Hands, that 'tis his Throne they fill, and that Obedience to them is enforc'd upon their Subjects by virtue of a Divine Authority and Command.

And the Skilful in our Laws say, That the Common Law, by way of Similitude, attributes to the King a Shadow of Divine Excellencies, because he represents the Person of God, and bears his Image. As (for instance) Sovereignty, all Lands being held of him ; Power, he commanding his Subjects to go out of the Realm to War, or making Foreign Coin Current by his Proclamation ; Majesty, he neither taking, nor parting with any Thing, without Matter of Record, except Chattels,

Chattels, or such like, below the Regard of Law ; Infiniteness, after a certain manner, being present in all his Courts, and, as it were, in all places of his Dominions ; Perpetuity, having perpetual Succession, and being not subject to dye ; Perfection, for no Laches, Folly, Infancy, or Corruption of Blood can be judged in him ; Truth, he cannot be estopped ; Justice, He cannot be a Disseizor, or do any Wrong.

These things I find vouch'd from such Authorities, as that they seem to me, to be Essential to our Constitution, and to be as good a Comment, as one would wish, on that Branch of the Text, now under Consideration, that *The House of David should be as God* ; intimating many high and excellent Prerogatives, they were invested in, and encircled withal.

But I must confine my Discourse to narrower Bounds, and therefore shall insist only on these two things.

1. That in the Monarchy, resembling God, the Persons in Power were truly Supream, *ἀνυπερβότοι*, unaccountable to any, as God can be compelled by none, nor be made accountable to them.

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2. That

2. That they resembled him in a kind of Immortality ; The King never died, the Monarchy was Successive and Hereditary.

1. They resemble God in being, ἀνυπεύθυνος, truly Supream and Unaccountable. Some learned Men will have this to have been the main difference betwixt the Judges that governed *Israel*, and the Kings of the House of *David*, That the former were to render an Account to the State, of the Administration of their Government, which the latter were not to do, but to God only. The very nature of the thing (indeed) proves it self sufficiently : For, wherever Sovereign Power is once lodged (because for the *Spartan* Shadows of a King, and the Dukes of *Venice*, I am not concerned to account here) there is evidently vested a Freedom from all forcible Controll or Coertion : And if *David* and his Race were Kings over all *Israel*, they had the eminent controlling Authority over the scattered, or united Power of the Body-Politick ; and so no *Sanhedrim*, no Assembly, no Consent of the People, no Officers of State, can be above them, in the way of proper Rule or Jurisdiction ; and violently to touch them in the very Skirts of their Mantle, is hugely culpable and criminal.

On

On the account of this Eminence, they are fenced and immured by the Laws, both of Earth and Heaven, from the undutiful Thought, and the sawcy Tongue, as well as the rebellious and assassinating Hand. We are not to curse the King, so much as in Thought, and we are not to revile the Gods, or speak Evil of the Rulers of the People : And blaspheming God, and the King, were Crimes that went coupled, and hand in hand ; and *St. Paul* recanted a rash Word spoken against a Person in Power, though horribly abusing it : And 'tis supposed that the old War of the Giants against the Gods, meant no more than Insurrections of mighty Subjects against their Kings : Sure we are, that, in a Divine Sense, 'tis no less than Resisting the Ordinance of God, to resist them ; and *They that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation.*

And the Christian Duty of Passive Obedience, and Non-Resistance, has unshaken Foundations, and inviolable Grounds, in the Eternal Laws of Nature and Equity ; in the Essential Frame and Subordination of Politick Societies to some Supream ; in the Inspired Writings of the Old and New Testa-

ment ; in the Examples of the Holy Jesus, and his meek Disciples ; in the Canons of the Church, and the Statutes of the Realm ; in the Monuments of Primitive Christianity, and the Sufferings of the most celebrated Martyrs.

As to this last, I confess, some have gone about to blast the Martyrs Lawrels, and represent them to have undergone their Sufferings, because they were weak in their Force, or in their Understandings ; and so they foolishly, or helplessly submitted to what could not be redrest.

And thus their Memories are Martyr'd, as their Bodies were before, and those illustrious passive Graces of Meekness and Resignation, of Christian Patience and Taking up the Cross, which are the bright Enamel of their Heavenly Crowns, which are the just Imitation of our Suffering Lord, which are the Eternal Theme of our Wonder and our Praise, which (in the Opinion of truly Good Men) do embalm their Names below ; and which above have preferred them to the highest Seats in the Church Triumphant. These, I say, are made to dwindle into mere politick Compliance with a helpless Necessity ; or are arraigned

arraigned, as Arguments of the Weakness of their Party, or their Ignorance of their Rights and Privileges: which Modern Professors (it seems) pretend now far better to understand, in these Days of New-Light, and by those extraordinary late Discoveries that have been made to the Kingdom of the Saints.

Suffice it us, that we know the ancient Channel, wherein Christianity ran; how it was propagated, and prevailed in the World, when it went forth conquering, and to conquer; and yet knew nothing of making its Way by Violence or Armies; by deposing of Kings, or fighting for Privileges; by Alterations of Governments, or Dis-inherison of Princes; that is, in plain English, when it was not acquainted with advancing Christ's Cause, by reproaching his Religion, or breaking any of his Commandments.

As for us, who adhere to the Establishment in the Church of *England*: It has hitherto been our just Glory (of which, none hereafter, I hope, shall deprive us) that, like the Wisdom from above, our Doctrines are pure, and our Principles and Practices peaceable; opposite to Idolatry against God, and Sedition against the King: And as this Church
has

has hitherto been, so may it for ever stand, the just Dread and Envy of our Enemies on either hand, and be a lasting Monument of the true Temper and Genius of the Christian Religion, till Time shall be no more.

But now, because we have exempted Sovereigns from being justly obnoxious to Outward Force or Violence, have we therefore cancell'd all Obligations upon them? Have we made mere Power to be Right, or Passion to be Law; or left Appetite to range, without either Rule or Bounds; and so put them into such a State, as is proper to none but the Great *Leviathan*; who, with full and Arbitrary Liberty, rowls and sports himself in his Watry Kingdom, and at pleasure Preys upon all the Lesser, and Defenceless Fry.

Surely 'tis not reasonable, thus to understand us. May not their Consciences be bound, though their Hands cannot? Is not every lower Orb limited and circumscribed by that which is above it; and though they be higher than the highest on Earth, yet still in Heaven is there not one higher than they? *Seneca*, of old, hath wisely and gravely told them,

them, *Quicquid a vobis minor extimescit, major hoc vobis Dominus minatur ; Omne sub Regno graviore Regnum est.* However they have no Peer on Earth, in their own Dominions, they are nevertheless Subjects of Heaven: and therefore they may, on that Score, lye under the the Obligation of publick Promises, and solemn Acts of Condescension : They may be tyed by sacred Vows and Oaths, by the Sense of Honour and Religion ; by the prudent Care of their Temporal, and an awful Regard to their Eternal, Interests ; by the Engagements of Justice, and Wisdom, and Tenderness, and Humanity : for even God himself, the great Potentate of the whole Universe, is not Arbitrary in any Exorbitant way ; but he forms the Awful Decrees and Resolves of his Almighty Will and Pleasure, by the Eternal Laws and Measures, of Rectitude, and Goodness, and Holiness, and Compassion.

2. The House of *David* resembled God, in a kind of Immortality : The King never dyed, the Monarchy being Successive and Hereditary.

As Monarchy is the best of Governments, for Order, Peace, Strength, Steadiness and Fixation,

2 Sam. 7.
per tot.

Fixation, so the Descent of this high Office, in the way of an Inheritance, is the best of Monarchies. And therefore, when God established a Government among his own People, he settled it in *David's* House for many future Years, and a great while to come : He promised, that when his own Days were fulfilled and he should sleep with his Fathers, yet he would set up of the Royal Progeny and Seed after him, and establish the Throne of his Kingdom for ever ; and this that holy Prince magnifies very much in the Favour of God towards him, that he had not only brought him to the Crown, that was but a small thing , in comparison of establishing the Kingdom in his Line, and his House, in *longinquum*, for many succeeding Ages and Generations. And thence it is, that we meet so often with the mention of the Blood-Royal, the Seed, the Progeny , and the Race of Kings, in the Historical Books of the Old Testament.

Hereby God wisely prevents a *Vacuum*, or Gap in Government, which in Politics and Societies, does oftentimes breed as preposterous and violent Changes, as it does in Nature, and at which, much Disorder and Confusion

is too apt to enter: Which must be confessed by all, who remember the many Tumults, dangerous Ferments, and Convulsions, that inseparably wait upon the Intervals of Government in Elective Kingdoms or Principalities.

So that if, on one hand, there be a hazard of personal Insufficiency for the high Charge, on the other, there is almost a Certainty of lasting Mischiefs, by the high Animosities of clashing Factions, and different Pretenders; and the notorious Sway, and mighty Ascendant, that Interest and partial Affections have in the Management of Elections, and free Choices, do ballance, at least, the personal Defects or Inconveniencies in the way of Descent and Succession. And when the Trees went out to chuse their King, the Bramble carried it from the fat Olive, the sweet Fig-Tree, and the gladfom Vine.

But further, It ought to be considered, that if Children, and the Fruit of the Womb be (in general) a Gift and Heritage that cometh of the Lord, that then it seems utterly unlikely, that God should abandon to Nature, and the fickle Laws of Generation, the Disposol of, and Succession into that high

Office, which is the Instrument of so many of his Providences to this lower World, and of so mighty Importance and Concernment to the Affairs of his Church and his Religion.

So that, if by such special Direction and Superintendence of Providence, it may be rationally concluded, that the Matter is from God, then we may be confident it will be more blessed, than the wisest of Men's Expedients or Inventions without, or against him. And there must surely be somewhat extraordinary in it, that when God threatens his severest Vengeance against the Nation of the *Philistins*, one part of it should be, to have the King perish from *Gaza*, and a Bastard to dwell in *Ashdod*.

Zech. 9. 5,
6.

Judg. 9. 19,
20.

They who set up the Spuriout *Abimelech*, rejoyced in him for a while, and *Abimelech* rejoyced in them; but this Sun-shine ended in very foul Weather, and the Matter had a sad and Tragical Period and Catastrophe; for a Fire was enkindled in short time between them, and devoured and consumed them both, and revenged the Injuries they had done, by their wicked Combination against *Jerubbaal* and his House, with whom they had dealt untruly and unsincerely.

How

How much better then is it, when God takes the Matter into his own Hand, and, together with Inherent Blood and Birthright, conveys and entails the Right to a Crown; and the same Providence that designs the Being, assigns the Station, he must hold, and the great Character he must sustain and manage. This, of old, I am sure, was frankly owned and recognized by *St. Ambrose* and *St. Augustine*, Learned, as well as Good, Men; *Cujus jussu nascuntur Homines, ejus jussu constituuntur Principes, inde illis Potestas unde Spiritus.* They thought that God, not only instituted the Office, and was the Fountain of the Authority, but was interessed too in the Designation of the Person, in whom it should be invested. Nor did they think it such a horrid Impeachment of a wise and gracious Providence, that Princes were sometimes sent to fill the Throne, who in Piety, or Gentleness, or other Princely Vertues, fell far short of the Perfections of a *Constantine*, or a *Theodosius*.

But the great Iniquity in the canvassing Questions of this sort, seems to be, That Men consider only the present Advantage or Security they propose; not the lasting Settle-

ment, or true Right of things; for if those were search'd into, (methinks) 'tis palpable and plain, that Foundations can neither be *safely* nor *justly* altered: Not *Safely*, because they who new model Kingdoms, must first force them, and crumble them into pieces, ere they can fit and dispose them for a new Fabrick; and this will bring in such dreadful Shakings and Convulsions, as may endanger the very Being of the Body Politick; and raise such violent Fermentations, as may go near to dissipate and destroy the whole. Not *Justly*, because Fundamental Laws that concern the Rights of Empire, and that relate to the Original Constitution of Things, and that fix and cut out the Channels, wherein for ever they were to run; These, I say, cannot be altered without the Violation of those Grounds and Laws of Reason, and Equity, and Social Life, which support and protect all Publick Establishments and Intercourses of Men. And if this might be attempted at the Instigation of any number of Fellow-Members of the same Society, against the Band of Union or Government, which secures the Whole, 'tis plain, all Original Conventions or Rights are laid by, as Insignificant

cant and Invalid, and then Matters come to Force and the Hostilities of Anarchy ; and Conscience, and Moral Honesty, will be lost, as well as Order and publick Peace.

To obviate, if possible, this intolerable Evil, Oaths of Succession, and sacred Tyes of Allegiance, have been imposed upon Subjects, to Kings and their Heirs ; and then all Lawful Rights and Titles are adopted into a Religious Sacredness and Obligation ; and the Duty is then enforced by a Supervening Awe and Dread of the Avenging Justice of that God, who would have *Cæsar's* Rights rendred to *Cæsar*, as well as his own to himself.

But, to conclude this Point ; If we would find sure Expedients to engage the Divine Favour, let us not grow distrustful of his Providence, nor run counter to his Will ; and, because we apprehend the Ark of God does totter or threaten to fall, in a rash, unwarrantable Zeal, stretch out our bold, unconsecrated Hands upon the visible Symbol of the Divine Presence, And so I go to

The Fourth and Last Observable in the Words.

The

The happy Influences, this Government should have upon the Subjects of it ; and this illustrated by the Gracious Conduct of the Angel of Old, that went before the Camp of Israel ; which is called, The Angel of the Divine Presence, and which conducted the Israelites out of Egypt, into the Promised Land.

*Vide Dr.
Hammond,
in 1 Cor.
10. 1.*

This hovered over, and overshadowed them like a Tent : Sometimes it appeared as a Pillar of a Cloud, for it was dusky and dark, when master'd and out-shined by the Sun's more powerful Rays ; and sometimes as a Pillar of Fire, when, like the Stars, it recover'd its Light in the Absence of the Sun. The Angel, that was in this Cloud, was their Guide to lead them in the tedious Wandrings of their Way, and was their Guard against the Dangers that might annoy or infest them. God's Name was upon it, and it moved by his Authority, and was a Symbol, and Visible Means, as well as a Representment, of his constant Watchfulness and Care over them. By its Coolness and Shade, they were shelter'd from the scorching Heats of the *Arabian* Deserts ; and by its environing them round, they were secured from the Pursuits of the enraged *Egyptians*, and the Annoyance of all other Enemies whatsoever. I

I must leave your own Thoughts and Experiences, to accommodate all this to the kindly Influences of that Government, under which we live; under whose Protection, and comfortable Shade, we sit safe and easie, and enjoy every thing that can sweeten our Passage through the Wilderness of this, or open us a hopeful Prospect into the other, World; by which we have a blessed Opportunity, if we will gratefully improve it, to lead peaceable and quiet Lives in all Godliness and Honesty.

For, though it be true in the General, that since God left off to converse with Men, by the visible Intercourse of Angels, there can be no fitter Representment of his constant Presence than by a Sovereign Magistrate; by whom God rules, though in more Humane Ways, and who is the Ordinary Means of conveying many of his publick Blessings to this lower World. Yet this We, of this Nation, have special Obligations to appropriate to our selves, and to esteem him that now fills the Throne, as the Angel, or Minister, of God to us for Good.

We shall grow unworthy of Blessings which we refuse to own, and in vain do we expect

expect that Heaven should smile on us afresh, if we continue Clouded under fullen and ungrateful Passions. Remember we that the murmuring and discontented *Israelites* did blast their own growing Happiness; and their mutinous Designs, of chusing new Captains, cut them short of their Happiness in the Promised Land.

Let Israel then rejoyce in Him that made Him, and let the Children of Sion be joyful in their King.

A Prince, who is Great and Free, as ever Monarch on the *English* Throne; but yet Great and Free, as those good Angels are, that preside over Humane Affairs, who cannot bend their Power to do Mischief, or Annoy.

A Prince, so far from affecting Arbitrary Power, that He is just beyond the Impeachment of Malice, and merciful, beyond either Merit or Example; and who out-does the Excellency and Goodness of the *English* Constitution, by His singular Temper in the Administration of it.

A Prince, who, like an Angel of God, is wise, to discern between Good and Evil; and can judge truly what Intrigues or Designs

signs are carried on, by demure Pretenders, to an Oak of Reformation, a Pilgrimage of Grace, or a True Protestant League or Association ; Who distinguishes easily and exactly between the Sacred and Genuine Gospel of Christ, and the *Evangelium Armatum* of the Jesuits, the Republicans, or the *Leviathan* ; and whose Senses are so well exercised in the Manage of His Authority, as to tell, with wonderful Sagacity, when Tenderness of Conscience is a pityable Infirmary, and when it is a stubborn and naughty Disease.

A Prince Who is Patient, almost beyond Provocation, and Generous, beyond Desert ; and Who can deny us nothing, but a Liberty to undo our selves ; and Who seems resolved that, even in spite of our selves, He will make us Happy.

A Prince Who, like *Moses*, was preserved, amidst wondrous Providences, to rescue us from the Slavery and Misery under which we groan'd ; and Who, like him too, is as meek as any upon Earth ; And when He returned from Exile to Empire, happily defeated an old Prophecy of bad Portent,

-----*Regnabit Sanguine multo*
Ad Regnum quisquis venit ab Exilio.

G

And p. 404.

Vide Sueton. in Tiberio, & Casaubon in locum,

And did neither enter, nor reign in Blood.

Plin. in
Pan.

Such is the Prince, whom God, This Day, first brought into the World, and, This Day, brought back to His own, and His Father's Throne; and such it was fit That Prince should be, Who was sent, and designed by God, to calm a stormy World, and to restore Peace and Plenty, Laws and Religion, to these distracted Nations. *Talem esse oportuit, Quem non Bella Civilia, non Armis oppressa Republica, sed Pax & Adoptatio, & tandem exorata terris numina dedissent.* Such it was fit He should be Whom, not the fatal Skirmishes of Civil War, not a Murinous and Fanatick Army, not popular Violence, or partial Election, but Peace and Justice, and Sacred Inherent Right, and the Mercies of Heaven, at length, listning to its pious Votaries on Earth, did advance to a Throne.

And what now remains, but That we all blest the Lord, and walk so worthy of his Divine Favour and Love, that he may still rejoyce over us, to do us good; And That, for the sake and according to the Precepts of that God, we obey and heartily reverence the King; and That, in warm Duty and Gratitude to the Crown, we chearfully
come

come in, and zealously take part with it, against all Hands that would shake its Stability, or Tongues that would darken or diminish its Lustre ; That we be forward and ready, upon all occasions, not only to support and guard, but to ease and oblige, the Throne, and to sweeten (what we may) the Burden of that Royal and Gracious Government, under whose Shadow we rejoyce.

And Thou, O Father of Lights ! Grant that, as this Day twice eminently did, so this, and all his Days, for long and many Tears, may rise prosperous and happy to our David, and his House, that He, and They, and We, all may gratefully rehearse thy Mercy, and declare thy Goodness, and ever rejoyce in thy Salvation. Amen.

F I N I S.

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